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Bloodbath as gunman kills 12 at US Batman screening

AURORA (AFP) - A masked, black-clad gunman in full body armor opened fire at a packed US movie theater showing the new Batman film yesterday in a bloodbath which left at least 12 dead and nearly 60 injured.

Chaos erupted when the gunman tossed two tear gas or smoke grenades into the audience at a midnight showing of "The Dark Knight Rises," then gunned down terrified patrons as they scrambled for the exits.

Police arrested the suspect - identified as 24-year-old James Holmes -- by his car at the rear of the theater, in Aurora, a suburb of the city of Denver, in Colorado.

Holmes, who reportedly attended the University of Colorado medical school until last month, had no criminal record aside from a citation for speeding in October 2011, according to police.

His nearby apartment was found to be booby-trapped



James Holmes

with a sophisticated arsenal of incendiary and chemical devices, which police chief Dan Oates said could take days to defuse.

"This is the act .. of a very deranged mind," said Colorado governor John Hickenlooper at a press conference, where Oates revealed that at least three weapons were used in the attack, which injured 59, many critically.

Continued on page 6

Process to convert fuel oil to LNG progressing in earnest on Aruba

Yesterday the Aruba government held a press conference at the City Hall to report on some important meetings taking place here. These meetings are between representatives of GasUnie, Anthony Veder, Aruba Ports Authority, Utilities NV, WEB and the Minister of Energy. The main agenda of these meetings is the use of LNG to help reduce our dependence on fuel oil and generate electricity and operate the refinery in Aruba.

During the different encounters with the different representatives, they reached several conclusions to start a process for Aruba. Among others, they discussed the need for an infrastructure to convert Diesel to Gas, specifically, to Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).

It was revealed during the press conference that several years ago an investigation was conducted on the matter of LNG together with the refinery and that GasUnie was involved back then as well.

Now the developments are such that GasUnie, Anthony Veder and Aruba are at the point of drawing a final conclusion to all the investigation conducted. For example, they are clear as to what type of infrastructure they will need to store the gas. Whether to use mobile tanks of LNG or mobile tanks on boats. They are also ready to draw conclusions as to what types of gas pipelines to use. However, they claim that it is becoming clearer to them that it would be best to build a storage tank, which they believe would be more convenient. That would be



similar to what they have done in Holland and in other countries.

The reason for this, they claim, is because the demand for gas is increasing every day, and with a storage tank they would be able to store a large supply of gas. They would be able to store enough for WEB, the refinery, automobiles, and homes and for cruise ships. Cruise ships in recent times

have begun the conversion to gas because of the peak in the price of Diesel.

All the research points to the possibility for a substantial reduction in the price of electricity, especially for those who need this most. Reportedly, and based on the information gathered at this press conference, the LNG project for Aruba could potentially be operational by 2015!

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Important insurance information for students going to Holland

The Aruba Department of Education, section Study and Guide Facility (DEA) informs that said department will have informative evenings concerning insurance issues for all students pursuing their further studies in Holland. These evenings are the last part of the preparation program for the students and it will be given by Boogaard Assurantiën N.V. The informative evenings will take place in the College Hall at EPI. The Department of Education appreciates the presence of parents as well.

E schedule is as follows:

GROUP	CITY OF STUDY	DATE	PLACE	HOOR
1	Rotterdam and Vlissingen	24 Juli 2012	College Hall EPI	6.30 pm – 7.30 pm
2	Tilburg, Den Bosch, Enschede and Zwolle	24 Juli 2012	College Hall EPI	7.30 pm – 8.30 pm
3	Amsterdam, Alkmaar, Wageningen, Maastricht and Sittard	24 Juli 2012	College Hall EPI	8.30 pm – 9.30 pm
4	Arnhem, Breda and Eindhoven	25 Juli 2012	College Hall EPI	6.30 pm – 7.30 pm
5	Den Haag, Delft	25 Juli 2012	College Hall EPI	7.30 pm – 8.30 pm
6	Groningen en Leeuwarden	25 Juli 2012	College Hall EPI	8.30 pm – 9.30 pm
7	Nijmegen	26 Juli 2012	College Hall EPI	6.30 pm – 7.30 pm
8	Utrecht en Leiden	26 Juli 2012	College Hall EPI	7.30 pm – 8.30 pm

For more information interested readers can visit the website www.ea.aw, section "Arubalening" under the A section in the alphabet menu. Readers can also visit the Facebook or Twitter; look for "Enseñansa Aruba" and/or "Education Aruba" to stay updated of all relevant information.

Census Office and AZV announcing special service dates for departing students

ORANJESTAD -- Recently the Study Facilities and Guidance section of the Department of Education held an information session and the signing of contracts for all students who applied for the Aruba Student Loans. Through this announcement, the Department of Education (DEA) is reminding these students leaving to go to study abroad with the Aruba Student Loans, that they are required to go to the Census Bureau to have their census record deleted. This can be done on the following dates and in the following sequence by name:

July 25, 2012: students with last names beginning with the letter A to L
 * 1.15 p.m. letters A,B,F.
 * 2.00 p.m. letters C,D,E,G
 * 3.00 p.m. letters H,I,J,K,L

July 26, 2012 – students with last names beginning with letters M to R
 * 9.00 a.m. letter M
 * 10.30 a.m. letters N,O y Q
 * 2.00 p.m. letter P
 * 3.00 p.m. letter R

July 27, 2012 – students with last names beginning with letters S to Z
 9.00 a.m. letter S
 10.30 a.m. letter T
 2.00 p.m. letter V
 2.30 p.m. letter W
 3.00 p.m. letters Y,Z

Each student will be written off the registry on the assigned date of their letter. If for whatever reason a student is unable to appear (for example a drivers license appointment, doctor, etc) they must inform the Census office before the appointment date.

To be written off the registry, a passport and a copy of the front page of the passport with its photo must be submitted.

For those born in Aruba and who do not yet have a birth certificate, this will be submitted to them together with the declaration of registry withdrawal.

The registry withdrawal fee is Awg. 5,-

Official Copy of the birth certificate is Awg. 15,-

Students should later proceed to AZV to be withdrawn from their data base as well. This can be done on the following dates:

July 26, 2012, letters A to P
 1:00 in the afternoon – 4:00 in the afternoon

July 27, 2012 or July 30, letters Q to Z
 7:30 in the morning to 3:00 in the afternoon

Remember to bring along:
 - Airline ticket
 - Passport
 - Proof of Census Withdrawal
 - AZV Card

It took 35 years for Colegio San Nic to finally expand!

SAN NICOLAS -- A truly historic moment in Aruban education will be celebrated on August 15th when after exactly 35 years of existence Colegio Aruba San Nicolas will open its doors as the first public HAVO/VWO school in Aruba complete with HAVO 4 and HL1 classes.

The HAVO section of the school will be complete up to HAVO 5 and HL3, which will

both end with the Dutch Kingdom, recognized HAVO Diploma that students can earn.

Plans are in place to eventually expand the VWO classes, which currently only goes up to the VWO3 class.

The Minister of Education remarked that he was joking when he chided in a meeting with the commission of Colegio San Nicolas that the school is a late bloomer... *cont. pg 2*

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Aruba House....Students need more information about repaying study loans!

Reportedly a large number of former students of the Dutch Caribbean have difficulty complying with the timely repayment of their study loans to the DUO Dutch financial student loans' institution. In most cases it is not an issue of not wanting to repay the loans, but rather a matter of inability. Due to low salaries that these students earn, they have great difficulty complying and maintaining regularity with their payments, according to Minister Plenipotentiary in Holland, Edwin Abath who reacted to a publication in Holland regarding student shortcomings on loan repayment.

In Abath's estimation, after an in-depth analysis of the problem, Aruban students are not sufficiently informed about the so-called "draagkrachtregeeling" (financial capacity ruling). The "financial capacity" ruling entails that with a minimum loan salary, the student can make arrangements with the DUO to either pay in increments or even apply for the legal postponement of payment. It is even so that after 15 years; the balance of the student loan debt can be completely exonerated.

DUO offers information concerning this social agreement, however not all our students are aware of this information. The Minister indicated that he will together with DUO intensify the facilitation of information to our Aruban students.

To achieve this, they will be using the website of the Aruba House more actively and will mobilize all the student mentors in the different cities across Holland. Abath observed that he laments the fact that so many Aruban students are being registered by Dutch

authorities as delinquent in their financial obligations, while in most cases this is not necessary and could have been avoided.

Students coming from the Caribbean have more difficulty complying with regular payments of their loan debts for different reasons, such as: studying abroad is very expensive. What's more the salaries in the Caribbean are much less than salaries in Holland. Another disadvantage is that the loan must be paid in Euros.

Nonetheless, the student remains responsible for his student loan debt. If a student has borrowed money from any source, in this case from Holland, he has to comply with the commitments made. If he fails to do so, he is giving Aruba a bad name. Hence, in the event a student's income is very low and is not able to pay his debt in time, he should not wait. He should inquire whether he qualifies for the "draagkrachtregeeling" (financial capacity ruling). Go to the website www.duo.nl for this information.

Students from the Dutch Caribbean may qualify for student financing (loans) from DUO. Due to the fact that the education in the Dutch Caribbean is in Dutch, most students logically chose to study in Holland. Many students complete their studies in the stipulated time and maintain their debt as low as possible. However, regrettably, we have students who, in many cases beyond their control, end up with spiraling debts. This obviously works against the success of their studies. For this reason, according to Minister Abath, it is imperative that Aruban students get all the important information before they leave Aruba to come to Holland to study.

New Commemorative stamps from PostAruba



Michiko Takatsu

Visitors looking for a unique and beautiful souvenir of Aruba will find the special commemorative stamps issued by PostAruba a wonderful keepsake of their visit, and a greatly appreciated gift by any stamp collectors back home.

Currently, there are five new issues for 2012 to be found at selected PostAruba outlets: the Philately window at their head office in Oranjestad and at PostAruba shop in the Palm Beach Plaza Mall. The newest issue came out on June 21st featuring the work of noted artist Michiko Takatsu, her first such project for the post office. Her original designs were created using col-



lage, a traditional Japanese "paper art" technique.

The theme is "Caribbean Dresses" and Michiko's creations are based on the flowing and colorful traditional cotton or linen dresses native to the region; they were cool and comfortable, usually of light colors to bounce off the sun's hot rays, complimented by vibrantly hued accents. Materials such as madras plaids were often deployed in clothing for both men and women.

"Caribbean Dress" is available in 4 stamps, each costing 4 Aruban florins, and there is a special first day issue ensemble of coordinated envelope and cancellation stamp, printed

in very limited quantities.

Sports enthusiasts and stamp collectors might also be very interested in the special



Ruthbert Wolfe creator of Olympic Commemorative

commemorative issued from May paying tribute to the 2012 Olympics in London. This series is sold only as a 4-stamp set designed by Ruthbert Wolfe, with a first day issue ensemble as well, of which a few may be left. Annual issues are usually offered as collectors' sets for one year following their debut or while supplies last.

The next issue will come out in August and is designed by noted graphic artists Adolfo Valbuena, it will pay homage to the annual Rembrandt Sailing Regatta, and will feature photographs rather than paintings.

by Rosalie Klein



Olympic games

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Colegio San Nic to finally expand!

Continued from page 2

because it took them 35 years to finally mature.

As one of those who worked hard to push forward on getting San Nicolas to have its own full-fledged HAVO VWO school, Dowers was very pleased and satisfied with the transition period and with the enthusiasm of the small but dynamic team of the Colegio San Nicolas. Dowers remarked that even some retired teachers made themselves available and contributed to the process to make Colegio San Nicolas a reality.

The Minister explained that Colegio San Nicolas will be offering students a fair chance. With the introduction of the HL, which is a slightly longer route, in which the HAVO 4 and HAVO 5 will be offered as a three year program (HL1, HL2 and HL3). The school will offer those students who may need or want more time the opportunity to complete their HAVO program in those 3 years.

The HL route will also offer MAVO graduates, who want to continue studying, but are not ready for a profession or is not interested in the EPI offerings, the opportunity to earn the HAVO diploma. During the longer route that student will have the time to make a decision as to their further advanced study and future career.

Colegio San Nicolas offers full time education during the day. Those students who were attending the afternoon HAVO have been transferred to the school. The Minister reiterated that the government of Aruba is committed to offering our young people an education at all levels. With Colegio San Nicolas the Ministry of Education is offering an opportunity to young people of San Nicolas and of the entire island. And, it appears that the entire Aruban community is very pleased with this development. Inhabitants of San Nicolas are especially happy now that their children need no longer rise so early to catch a bus to go all the way to town for school...no more bus and bus cards, etc.! This way we are not only serving the young student, but also his/her parents and family and at the same time the teachers, according to Dowers.

The Morning News congratulates San Nicolas and all the young people who will benefit from this important development! Now, our young people can "slaap uit" before getting up for school every morning!

The government is intent on setting up a National School Book Fund

This past week the government announced on television during a popular talk show that they have decided to establish a National Book Fund. The Minister, who made the announcement, Arthur Dowers of Education, said that they are working diligently to allocate a million Aruban florins to realize the first part of this National Book Funds project.

According to Dowers, the first part of the project will en-

tail school books for Colegio San Nicolas, which has recently been incorporated as a new public HAVO/VWO school, and eventually the fund should include all MAVO public schools.

After that process has been established and is functional, they will open it up to other school boards who may want to come on board the system, according to Dowers. The Minister of education empha-

sized in his announcement that the government must guarantee each child going to school quality material that would motivate them. Children getting copies of books to study from should be a thing of the past, he said. Books are an essential part of the school's curriculum.

Dowers is also concerned about the high cost of the rent of books. This he said should never be so high that it be-

comes an obstacle to going to school. The fee of the book fund should be affordable. Furthermore, says Dowers.... "everyone admitted to a school must have a pleasant school career and be treated with dignity and get the necessary support for books on time and whenever this is necessary. A young person should never stay away from school because he can't afford to pay for school books."

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TUESDAY AND FRIDAY: LIVE MUSIC

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Syrian forces launch all-out Damascus assault

DAMASCUS (AFP) - Syrian forces launched an all-out assault on opposition strongholds in Damascus yesterday, a day after rebels seized crossings on the Iraq and Turkey borders on the 16-month conflict's deadliest day so far.

Rebel fighters also clashed with troops in several neighbourhoods of Aleppo in what a human rights watchdog said was the fiercest fighting so far in Syria's second city.

At the United Nations, the Security Council voted unanimously to give one final 30-day extension to a troubled observer mission that was supposed to be overseeing a peace plan for Syria but which suspended its operations on June 16 in the face of mounting violence.

The vote came after emergency consultations just hours before the expiry of the 300-strong mission's mandate after Russia threatened to use its veto powers as a council permanent member for the second time in as many days.

State television trumpeted the news of the military's Damascus offensive.

"Our brave army forces have completely cleansed the area of Midan in Damascus of the remaining mercenary terrorists and have re-established security," it said, using the regime term for rebels.

A security services source told AFP the military has launched a general offensive in Damascus. The assault comes after a Wednesday bombing that killed four senior members of the regime, including the national security chief, who died yesterday. At least 128 people were killed across Syria yesterday.

General Hisham Ikhtiyar had been wounded along with Interior Minister Mohammed

al-Shaar in the National Security headquarters bombing, which was claimed by the Free Syrian Army (FSA).

After Wednesday's bombing, a security source warned that the regime would step up its operations against the rebels. State television broadcast footage it said was from Damascus showing weaponry reportedly captured from rebels, including material marked "Made in USA," as well as scenes of prisoners seated on the ground, their hands bound.

Several Latin American nations yesterday prepared to evacuate their citizens.

So far, only Brazil has ordered its diplomats to leave Damascus temporarily for Beirut, the Lebanese capital, with one official staying behind at the embassy to handle consular matters.

Agency Brasil, the state news agency, estimated that around 3,000 Brazilians lived in Syria before the anti-regime revolt escalated but it had no details on how many have since departed. Brazilian authorities had readied an evacuation plan for those still in the country, it reported.

Chile, meanwhile, asked its 158 nationals to leave Syria due to the deteriorating security situation and planned their evacuation to the border with Lebanon. The Chilean ambassador in Damascus said he was looking into a possible withdrawal of his embassy staff.

Argentina said around 75 of its less than 200 citizens still in Syria had asked to be evacuated and indicated that it could close its embassy if the situation worsens.

Venezuela and Cuba would not say whether they have nationals in Syria or whether they are contemplating closing their Damascus embassies.

Bloodbath as gunman kills 12...

Continued from page 1

Cinemas in New York tightened security at Batman showings following the attack, and the French premiere of the film in Paris was cancelled.

A spokeswoman for the San Diego Police Department, Andra Brown, said Holmes' family was shocked by the incident.

"They are fully cooperating with law enforcement officials both here and in San Diego and in Colorado," Brown said outside the family home, which was put under police protection. Holmes is originally from San Diego.

President Barack Obama cut short a campaign trip to Florida and returned to the White House to address the situation, although his spokesman said there appeared to have been no link to terrorism.

"Such violence, such evil, is senseless. But, while we will never know fully what causes somebody to take the life of another, we do know what makes life worth living," the president told a somber crowd in Florida.

"The people we lost in Aurora loved and they were loved," Obama said.

Following the shooting, Obama and his Republican rival Mitt Romney came under pressure on gun control, with lobby groups and some political leaders calling for legislation to restrict civilians' access to firearms.

"Maybe it's time that the two people who want to be president of the United States stand up and tell us what they are going to do because this is obviously a problem across the country," New York mayor Michael Bloomberg said.

Both campaigns offered sympathy for the dead, but neither promised to change federal gun law. The right to bear arms in enshrined in the second amendment to the US constitution.

"The president believes we



Shamecca Davis hugs her son Isaiah Bow, who was an eye witness to the shooting, outside Gateway High School where witness were brought for questioning last night in Denver.

need to take common-sense measures that protect Second Amendment rights of Americans, while ensuring that those who should not have guns under existing law do not get them," Obama's spokesman said.

Obama ordered US flags to be flown at half-mast for six days to honor the victims.

Oates, the Aurora police chief, said the suspect set off two devices to distract the crowd and opened fire with an AR-15 assault rifle, a Remington shotgun and a Glock automatic pistol.

He was arrested by his car outside the theater without resistance.

Ten people were killed at the scene and two more died of their wounds, police said. A local children's hospital reported six young victims, the youngest was aged only six.

"The injured and dead in-

clude a wide age range. The conditions of the injured also vary, with some suffering very serious wounds," said police.

Witnesses described chaos chillingly similar to that depicted in the Batman films, in which maniacal villains terrorize Gotham City.

They said several audience members had shown up in costumes, which could have allowed the gunman to blend in with the melee and complicated the arrest.

A major US cinema chain announced yesterday a ban on face masks and fake weapons in its theaters, following the massacre.

In a statement hours after the horrific shootings in Aurora, Colorado, AMC said it would also not allow costumes that might make other filmgoers "uncomfortable," in a move to give them "as much peace of mind as possible."

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Police struggle to identify Bulgaria suicide bomber

SOFIA (AFP) - Bulgarian police aided by the FBI and Interpol struggled yesterday to identify a suicide bomber 48 hours after he killed six people including five Israeli tourists, with authorities saying only he was a foreigner.

Investigators have released CCTV footage of the person they believe carried out Wednesday's attack in the Black Sea airport of Burgas on a bus carrying Israeli holiday-makers, which also claimed the life of the Bulgarian driver.

"Bulgaria is working with two other countries to determine the identity of the bomber," Interior Minister Tsvetan Tsvetanov told a news conference in Burgas, saying the attacker was "not a Bulgarian citizen."

Investigators "are working very actively on Wednesday's terrorist attack. There will be more information within three or four days," Prime Minister Boyko Borissov told parliament.

The New York Times meanwhile cited unnamed US officials as believing the suicide bomber as a member of a Hezbollah cell acting on Iranian instructions, corroborating Israel's version of events that is angrily rejected by Tehran.

More than 30 people were also injured, three of them seriously, all of whom have since been repatriated, as have around 60 others who escaped injury. Some opted to continue their vacation in the Black Sea resorts popular with Israelis.

Airport video footage released by Bulgarian authorities showed an apparently white male with long hair, possibly a wig, dressed in typical holiday gear -- shorts, a baseball cap, sneakers -- and carrying a backpack and a laptop bag.

Tsvetanov said the man, who was shown wandering around the airport, looked around 36 years old. Investigators have recovered a driving licence from the US state of Michigan that is thought to be fake.

The name on the licence, an image of which was shown on Bulgarian television, is Jacque Felipe Martin of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, born in 1987.

Investigators have taken fingerprints from the bomber's body and are trying to find a DNA match.

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Kremlin: Putin warns against action on Syria outside UN

MOSCOW (AFP) - Russian President Vladimir Putin warned Western powers yesterday not to take unilateral action against the Syrian government outside the UN Security Council.

The Kremlin said Putin delivered the comments at a closed meeting of Russia's powerful Security Council that groups all the top ministers and

decides strategy on the most sensitive foreign and domestic affairs.

"In the opinion of the Russian president, any attempts to act outside the UN Security Council will be ineffective and only undermine the authority of this international organisation," news agencies quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying at the meet-

ing.

The spokesman said Putin also rejected Western charges that Russia was inciting even more violence in Syria by blocking with China possible sanctions against its Middle East ally for the third time on Thursday.

"Members of the Russian Security Council underscored the complete inappropriateness

and unacceptability of attempts to tie the tensions in Syria to the position taken by the Russian Federation," Peskov said.

His comments were issued only moments after the Security Council unanimously approved a resolution extending a UN monitors mission in Syria for another 30 days.

Health & Living

Calls to speed AIDS response expected at world meet



WASHINGTON (AFP) - Some 25,000 people, including celebrities, scientists and HIV sufferers are expected in the US capital Sunday to call for a jumpstart in the global response to the three-decade AIDS epidemic.

Held every two years, the International AIDS Conference returns to the United States for the first time since 1990, after being kept away by laws that barred people with HIV from traveling to the country.

The US ban was formally lifted in 2009, and researchers have described fresh optimism in the fight against AIDS on several fronts ahead of the six-day conference that starts Sunday and runs through July 27.

Deaths and infections are down in the parts of the world most ravaged by the disease, while the number of people on treatment has risen 20 percent

about half the people who should be on treatment worldwide, suggesting much more remains to be done.

Eastern Europe and central Asia are experiencing worsening epidemics, while the United States has been unable to curb the rate of new infections in recent years despite a host of new research advances.

More than 34 million people worldwide are living with HIV, a higher number than ever before, and around 30 million have died from AIDS-related causes since the disease first emerged in the 1980s, according to UNAIDS.

Advances in antiretroviral medication have transformed the disease from a death sentence into a manageable condition for many sufferers.

The drugs have also offered hope in preventing new cases by making infected people less

from 2010 to 2011, reaching eight million people in needy countries.

However this is only

contagious during sex and offering healthy people some degree of protection if they take the medication daily.

But trials on the approach called pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, have shown mixed results, with some failing to help prevent HIV at all, suggesting that uninfected people may have a hard time adhering to the regimen.

And there remains a major gap in the United States between the number of people diagnosed and the number with their viral load under control through medication, a phenomenon known as the "treatment cascade."

Even though 80 percent of people with HIV in America are aware of their status, just 28 percent have the disease under control, a trend that Ronald Valdiserri, director of the US Office of HIV/AIDS Policy, said Thursday "is bound to be a topic of discussion."

President Barack Obama, who has faced some criticism for his decision not to attend in person, is sending a video message.

Health Tip: Have Your Headaches Evaluated

Sinus: pain is behind browbone and/or cheekbones	Cluster: pain is in and around one eye	Tension: pain is like a band squeezing the head	Migraine: pain, nausea and visual changes are typical of classic form

-- Headaches, especially when they occur suddenly and frequently, can signal a serious condition that requires more than an over-the-counter pain reliever.

The Womenshealth.gov says your doctor should evaluate your head pain if you:

- Have headaches that occur several times per month and last for hours, or even days, at a time.
- Have headaches that interfere with school, work or home.
- Have headaches accompanied by vision changes, vomiting or nausea, numbness or tingling.
- Have headaches that cause pain around an ear or eye.
- Have headaches that are severe and are accompanied by a stiff neck.
- Have headaches accompanied by confusion, loss of alertness or convulsions.
- Have frequent headaches all of a sudden, when headaches used to be rare.

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Some Swiss hospitals follow German circumcision ruling

GENEVA (AFP) - A German court ruling that branded circumcision as grievous bodily harm has created waves in Switzerland where a second hospital announced on Friday a possible halt to the procedure.

The announcement, by St Gall hospital in the country's northeast, follows a decision Thursday by the Zurich children's hospital to temporarily suspend the operation, media reported.

The development is unlikely to affect the practice in Switzerland, where it can be carried out in any hospital for a fee, the spokesman added.

A senior executive at the St Gall teaching hospital said a decision would be taken after the summer holidays, Beobachter magazine reported.

In French-speaking Switzerland, a spokesman for Lausanne's university hospital expressed surprise at the level of debate surrounding the issue.

The hospital carried out the operation because it was im-

portant that it took place "in the best medical conditions possible", said a spokesman.

The Swiss reaction follows a June ruling by a court in the German city of Cologne which said that circumcision was tantamount to grievous bodily harm.

German diplomats have admitted the ruling was "disastrous" to Germany's international image, following uproar from religious and political leaders in Israel as well as Muslim countries.

Chancellor Angela Merkel has said the verdict risked making Germany a "laughing stock".

German MPs adopted a cross-party motion on Thursday calling on the government to protect religious circumcision.

The resolution urges Berlin to draw up legislation in the autumn that "ensures that the circumcision of boys carried out to medically professional standards and without undue pain is fundamentally permissible".

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Sci-Tech

No end in sight for US drought: experts



WASHINGTON (AFP) - There is no end in sight to a vast hot spell causing the worst US drought in 25 years, with more high temperatures and dry weather anticipated over the next few months, forecasters said yesterday.

The United States is not alone in experiencing severe weather. Global land temperatures in June were the highest ever since records began in 1880, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Overall the world's land surface was 1.93 degrees Fahrenheit (1.07 Celsius) above average, said the monthly report, called NOAA's State of the Climate Global Analysis.

When land and sea temperatures were averaged together, it was the fourth warmest June on record.

In another worrying indicator, a measure of Arctic sea ice cover showed the second smallest amount since records began in 1979.

A massive amount of sea ice four times the size of Texas was lost last month -- 1.1 million square miles (2.86 million square kilometers), an all-time high for June.

Strong storms worthy of being named for their potential to become hurricanes were also abnormally high in the North Atlantic, marking the first time on record there have been four such events before July 1 in a single year.

Tropical storms Alberto and Beryl, Hurricane Chris and Tropical Storm Debby combined to cause unusually high rainfall in the southeastern United States, NOAA analysts said.

Elsewhere in the world, conditions were wetter than normal, such as in Britain, which experienced the most rain ever in June since records began in 1910.

The forecast was grim for the US drought, which officials have said would likely drive up food prices since 78 percent of US corn and 11 percent of soybean crops have been hit in the United States, the world's biggest producer of those crops.

There is a possibility this could get worse," said Jake Crouch, a climatologist at NOAA's National Climatic Data Center.

NOAA forecasts for August showed above-average temperatures for most of the United States, a trend that is typically accompanied by less precipitation than normal.

That double punch of high temperatures and low rainfall is expected to continue through October and possibly through the end of the year.

While no forecast is definitive, trends indicate a "greater chance that there is no relief possible or in sight," said Dan Collins, monthly forecaster at NOAA's Climate Prediction Center.

The current drought has been compared to a 1988 event that cut production by 20 percent and cost the economy tens of billions of dollars.

About 61 percent of the country is now affected by the drought.

An international report released earlier this month found that climate change is boosting the odds of some extreme weather events, and likely played a role in last year's Texas drought that endured for six months.

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Ancient Mayan 'night sun' temple found in Guatemala



Archeologists have uncovered a 1,600-year-old Mayan temple dedicated to the "night sun" atop a pyramid tomb in the northern Guatemalan forest near the border with Mexico. Archeologists say the temple was likely built to honor the leader buried under the Diablo Pyramid tomb, the governor and founder of the first El Zotz dynasty called Pa'Chan, or "fortified sky." Mayan civilization, which spread through southern Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Belize, was at its height between 250 and 900 AD. Carbon dating places construction of the temple at the early part of that era, somewhere between 350 and 400 AD, the archeologists said. More than half the temple is still to be excavated, co-project leader Thomas Garrison of the University of Southern California told a press conference this week at Guatemala City's National Palace of Culture. Excavations by the Guatemalan and American team began at the El Zotz dig in 2006. This undated picture released by El Zotz Archaeological Project shows archaeologist Edwin Roman posing in front of a bas-relief depicting the Night Sun found under a pyramid at the Zotz archaeological site, in the Peten jungle, 550 kms north of Guatemala City. AFP Photo

Australia's Qantas dumps BlackBerry in Apple push

(AFP) - Flagship Australian airline Qantas said Thursday it was ditching BlackBerry for Apple's iPhone and rolling out in-flight iPad entertainment streaming, dealing a blow to the US firm's rivals. Analysts said it was a fatal blow for RIM and would likely trigger "significantly more defections" from the outdated BlackBerry maker, which is struggling to remain relevant against its fast-evolving rivals. American Airlines has launched a similar programme with Samsung's Galaxy tablet for first and business class domestic passengers, but content is pre-loaded rather than streamed direct. RIM has seen its global market share halve from 13.6 to 6.4 percent in the past year and said last month it would lay off 5,000 staff as it reported a \$518 million loss. Its Australian office said BlackBerry remained committed to the corporate sector and was "one of the most reliable and cost-effective solutions for mobile enterprise".

COMICS

PICKLES



MOMMA



CALVIN and HOBBS



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ACROSS

1. Tycoon, for short
4. Interrogator
9. G-man's org.
12. Woods's org.
13. Merge
14. Will Ferrell Christmas movie
15. Fa's follower
16. Went to the movies with
17. Ump's counterpart
18. Burning
20. Model Crawford
22. On the ball
24. Traffic tie-up
25. Cooks cabbage
26. Lil' Kim and

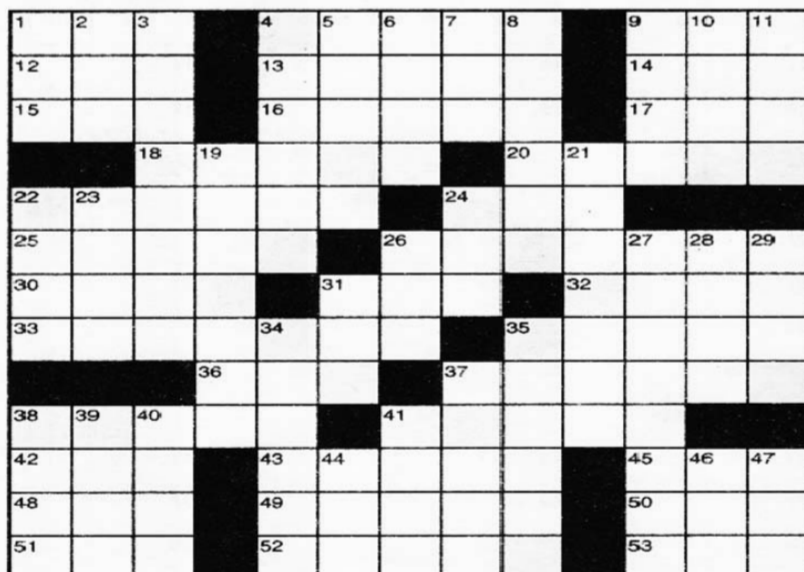
30. Busta Rhymes, e.g.
31. Laze around
32. Wall-climbing vine
33. Café au ____
35. Enrolls
36. ____ Rica
37. "Vinyl" (abbr.)
38. Trade
41. Summer cooker
42. Mixer setting
43. Indicate agreement
44. Home
45. Nipper's company (abbr.)
48. From ____ Z (2 wds.)

49. Lifting device
50. Reaction to an IM joke
51. NBA's Unseld
52. Learned scholars
53. Football measures (abbr.)

DOWN

1. Gore and Biden, e.g. (abbr.)
2. "Here ____ again!" (2 wds.)
3. Like a royal estate

4. IRS actions
5. Type of drum
6. Franklin's flier
7. French summer
8. Bellboy
9. Leafy plant
10. Ran, as madras
11. Chancy
19. Consummate
21. Entreat
22. Ready, willing, and ____
23. Any minute
24. Noisy bird
26. Campers' vehicles (abbr.)
27. Type of wind
28. Ritual
29. Chief actor
31. "____ a living!"
34. Squashing sounds
35. Stroke lovingly
37. Move
38. Wear down teeth
39. Fixed routine
40. Vows exchanged at the altar (2 wds.)
41. Early computer game
44. ____ constrictor
46. Bland fish
47. Capone and Gore



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POLICE HDQS
Telephone 100

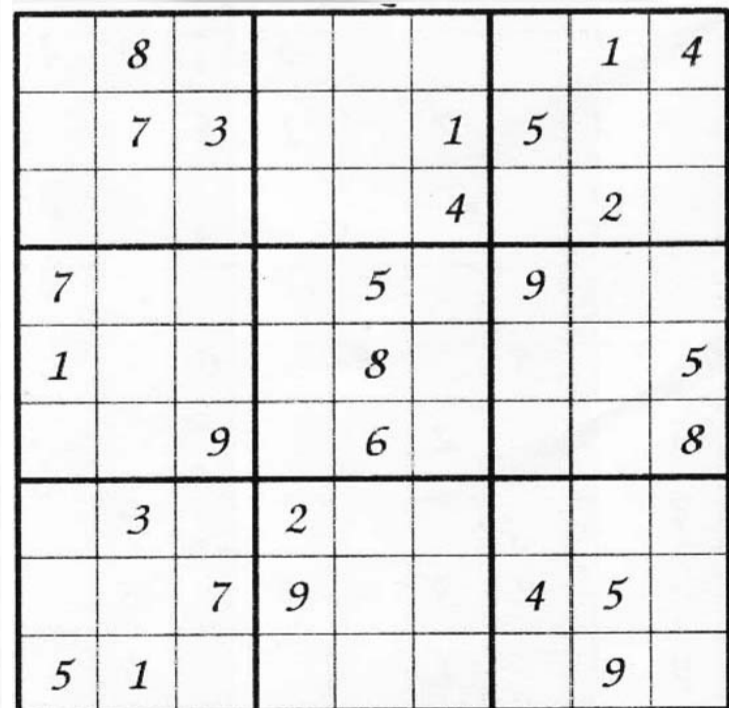
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SOLUTION

9	6	2	8	1	5	4	3	7
5	3	7	9	1	6	2	8	4
1	8	4	5	3	7	9	6	2
8	1	2	9	4	6	5	3	7
5	9	6	8	1	2	4	7	3
2	7	6	5	1	8	9	3	4
4	2	8	7	5	1	6	9	3
6	9	5	1	2	8	4	7	3
7	1	3	6	9	5	8	2	4

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9. A number is Never repeated in a row or column. In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9

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2 Floor
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3 Floor
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4 Floor
Office, Luggages and sporting gear.
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Mainstreet Downtown Aruba

Finance

Departing IMF economist rips fund's leadership

WASHINGTON (AFP) - A departing senior IMF economist has excoriated the fund, alleging it failed to address Europe's crisis and "suppressed" its challenges, according to a letter published yesterday.

In the letter obtained by CNN, Peter Doyle also accused Christine Lagarde, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, of being "tainted" by a faulty selection process.

Doyle, in a resignation letter dated June 18 to the IMF executive board, expressed regret to have worked at the Washington-based global lender.

Doyle said it was not just a matter of the fund's incompetence amid the global crisis and in surveillance ahead of the eurozone crisis, but because the institution deliberately had shirked its responsibilities.

"The substantive difficulties in these crises, as with others, were identified well in advance but were suppressed here," he wrote. "Timely sustained warnings were of the

essence. So the failure of Fund to issue them is a failing of the first order. That inaction has caused suffering for many, including Greece, and "the second global reserve currency (euro) is on the brink."

The IMF has been "playing catch-up" in reactive responses in last-ditch efforts to save it, the economist charged.

Contacted by AFP for comment on the letter, IMF spokesman Bill Murray said: "We have no evidence his views were suppressed, nor any views were suppressed."

Doyle accused the IMF of "European bias" which he said was becoming more deeply entrenched, despite reform commitments. "This fact is most clear in regard to appointments for managing director which, over the past decade, have all-too-evidently been disastrous."

According to a person close to the situation, Doyle has been a division chief responsible for non-eurozone countries Israel, Sweden and Denmark and has had no crisis country responsibilities in the European Department.

Fitch downgrades three major Japanese banks

TOKYO (AFP) - Fitch said yesterday it cut the credit rating of three of Japan's biggest banks over concerns about Tokyo's ability to support the financial sector, after the nation's sovereign debt rating was also cut.

The ratings agency lowered its rating by one notch to 'A-' from 'A' -- the seventh highest on a 22-rating scale - for Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group (MUFG), Mizuho Financial Group (MHFG), and Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group.

In the same statement, Fitch said it also lowered its rating for Sumitomo Mitsui Trust Bank to the same level as the major banks.

"The downgrade...reflects the government's weakened financial ability to support the banking system as indi-

cated by the downgrade of Japan's sovereign rating," Fitch said in a statement.

In May, the agency cut Japan's credit rating, citing its "leisurely" efforts at shrinking a massive public debt, as Tokyo struggles to kickstart the world's third-largest economy.

The agency downgraded Japan's long-term rating to "A+" from "AA", with a negative outlook, noting "growing risks for Japan's sovereign credit profile as a result of high and rising public debt ratios".

Fitch yesterday kept its outlook on the Japanese lenders at stable, which suggested it had no imminent plan to cut their ratings again.

The agency's downgrade on the banks comes about two months after they re-

ported across-the-board surges in annual profits, with Mitsubishi UFJ posting a 68 percent spike on trading and one-time gains.

The trio's combined net profits totalled nearly 2.0 trillion yen, the largest since the global financial crisis with Japanese lenders having suffered less than most of their Western counterparts.

However the figures were not rooted in their core banking business of lending, but rather factors including gains from sales of Japanese government bonds, which lenders have relied on for returns amid sluggish loan demand.

The downgrade on Japan's sovereign rating followed similar downgrades by rival agencies Moody's and Standard & Poor's in the past year and a half.

Spain outlook darkens, region seeks aid

Madrid (AFP) - Spain's economic outlook darkened yesterday as it warned its recession will drag on through 2013 and one of its indebted regions reached out for emergency aid from the cash-strapped government.

The regional authority of Valencia said it was applying to borrow from a fund of 18 billion euros set up last week by the central government for struggling regions.

In response, the Madrid stock exchange plunged by more than five percent, dragged down by banking shares which found no support in a eurozone rescue deal for the sector finalised by finance ministers yesterday.

Spanish long-term borrowing costs meanwhile rose to levels considered unsustainable, reflecting growing concerns about Spain's financial stability.

"The steady stream of bad

economic and financial news coming out of Spain is deconstructing foreign investor sentiment," said Raj Badiani of analyst group IHS Global Insight.

The economy is set to shrink by 1.5 percent in 2012, a slight improvement on a previous forecast of 1.7 percent -- and by a further 0.5 percent in 2013, Budget Minister Cristobal Montoro said in his latest economic forecasts. The government had previously expected 2013 growth of 0.2 percent.

A budget ministry official told AFP the unemployment rate this year would hit a huge 24.6 percent, topping an earlier estimate of 24.3 percent in a sign of the ongoing impact of Spain's bitter recession.

The economy is forecast to return to growth of 1.2 percent in 2014 and 1.9 percent in 2015, Montoro told a news conference after a cabinet

meeting.

"For next year the economic scenario is that the recession will continue, but more softly," he said.

Unemployment will peak this year before declining to 24.3 percent in 2013, 23.3 percent in 2014 and 21.8 percent in 2015, the ministry said.

"There is not positive employment but the destruction of jobs will stop," Montoro said.

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

P	T	A	S	P	S	T	B	A
H	I	D	D	A	L	A	I	R
D	M	V	A	L	A	N	S	A
E	M	P	T	E	A	I	D	
S	P	R	A	T	H	A	W	A
O	U	T	S	D	A	B	M	T
F	R	I	A	R	C	I	C	
T	E	S	S	D	S	J	O	A
R	E	S	E	A	T	R	I	N
M	T	V	O	B	A	M	A	
P	R	E	E	D	G	A	R	L
E	O	N	R	E	E	S	E	L
A	C	T	S	T	E	R	Y	A

Daily Exchange Rates

Current as 07/20/2012	Currency Code	Buying rate banknotes	Buying Cheques	Selling Rate
U.S.A.	USD	1.77	1.78	1.80
Dutch Antilles	ANG	98.00	100.00	100.20
Canada	CAD	1.74	1.76	1.78
Britain	GBP	2.73	2.78	2.84
Switzerland	CHF	180.73	181.45	182.25
Netherlands	EUR	215.32	217.29	219.47
Sweden	SEK	24.71	25.43	26.23
Denmark	DKK	28.23	28.95	29.75
Norway	NOK	28.30	29.02	29.82
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PARIS : Employees remove promotional boards from the facade of the Gaumont-Champs-Elysees cinema where the French premiere of the latest Batman movie was supposed to take place on July 20, 2012 on the Champ-Elysees avenue in Paris. The French premiere was cancelled after at least 12 people were killed when a gunman opened fire at a US cinema showing of the film.

AFP PHOTO

First of 'Fifty Shades' trilogy grips Germany



BERLIN (AFP) - The first novel in the erotic trilogy series "Fifty Shades" has proved a smash hit in Germany, sell-

ing half a million copies in 11 days, publishers said Friday, despite mixed critical reviews.

The German-language version of the steamy best-seller by British author E.L. James has been flying off the shelves, with 500,000 copies of "Geheimes Verlangen", translated as "Secret Desires", sold since it appeared on July 9.

"The first print-run has gone. We're now printing more than a million new copies," a spokeswoman for the Goldmann publishing house based in the southern city of Munich told AFP.

"This is first and foremost a love story with an erotic element, so there is a large potential readership. Women are especially partial to love sto-

ries," the spokeswoman added.

The story of a 21-year-old English literature student and her sadistic billionaire lover has enjoyed huge success in the English-speaking world.

Print and ebook sales of the "Fifty Shades" trilogy in the United States broke the 20-million mark earlier this month.

Worldwide, the "Fifty Shades" books -- starting with "Fifty Shades of Grey" -- have sold a total of 31 million copies in all English-language markets, the Wall Street Journal reported earlier this week.

Hollywood is preparing a film version.

However, as in other countries, the critical reaction has not been universally positive.

"The only sado-masochistic experience consists in reading these 600 badly-written and deathly boring pages," wrote weekly Die Zeit.

Cultural magazine Cicero bemoaned the "almost obscene" interest in the novel, the first of the trilogy published in Germany.

The Sueddeutsche Zeitung daily criticised the "subliminal advertising" for luxury cars, clothing brands or gadgets.

Images of Marilyn Monroe go on display in Poland

WARSAW (AFP) - A collection of photographs of Marilyn Monroe obtained by the Polish state as part of a foreign debt settlement will go on display in Warsaw next month before they are auctioned off later this year.

Poland's State Treasury received the shots of Monroe taken by her friend Milton Green in a collection of nearly 4,000 photographs it received as part of the 1995 financial agreement.

The collection also contains images of Frank Sinatra, Liza Minnelli, Marlon Brando, Judy Garland and Marlene Dietrich.

Monroe is snapped dressed in jeans fixing her lipstick and



hair, eating a meal and coyly chatting on the phone in several photos published online

Friday by Poland's leading Gazeta Wyborcza daily.

The exhibition runs from August 6 to September 6 at the Association of Polish Artists (and) Photographers, organisers told AFP Friday.

According to the association some of the images of Monroe are previously unseen.

No date has yet been fixed for the auction, but Poland's State Treasury expects it to go ahead before the end of the year and fetch upwards of \$680,000 (560,000 euros).



527 4000



Dr. Horacio
E. Oduber

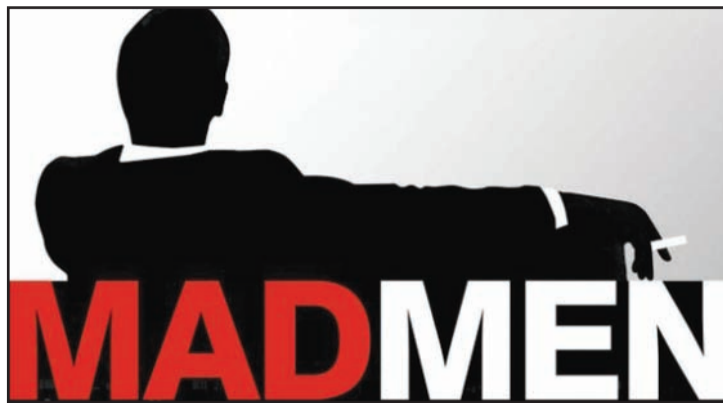
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'Mad Men' dominates Emmy nominations



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - "Mad Men" dominated nominations for the primetime Emmy awards on Thursday, a triumph for the 1960s-themed series that almost failed to return for its fifth season this year.

The show is up against "Boardwalk Empire," "Breaking Bad," the British-made "Downton Abbey," "Game of Thrones" and "Homeland" for best drama series, but unlike any of its rivals, it figures in all nine drama-related categories.

Nominations for the top honors in US television were announced at the not-very-primetime hour of 5:40 am (1240 GMT). The awards night, hosted by late-night comic Jimmy Kimmel, is set for September 23.

Set in a New York advertising agency in a decade of radical social change, "Mad Men" is already in the television record books as the only series ever to win the best drama Emmy for every season it has aired.

But the show, which returned for its fifth season in March, almost died last year when talks on a new contract between creator Matthew Weiner, production company Lionsgate and the AMC cable channel turned acrimonious.

Weiner, who at one point stormed out of the negotiations, fought tooth and nail

against boardroom attempts to lower the cost of making the show, which despite its cult status has never brought in big advertising revenues.



2011 file photo - Mad Men received its fourth consecutive Emmy for best drama

The long list of "Mad Men" nominees included Jon Hamm for best actor, Elisabeth Moss for best actress, Jared Harris for best supporting actor and Christina Hendricks for best supporting actress.

Overall, "Mad Men" collected 17 nominations, one more than "Downton Abbey," which last year won in the miniseries category.

Up for best comedy are "The Big Bang Theory," after five seasons on CBS still one of the top-rated sitcoms on US television, as well as "Curb Your Enthusiasm," "Modern Family," "30 Rock" and newcomers "Girls" and "Veep."

Hit new Fox sitcom "New Girl" failed to make the grade, but its star Zooey Deschanel, who plays a quirky school-teacher sharing an apartment with three men, earned a nomination for outstanding lead actress in a comedy series.

The star and creator of "Girls," Lena Dunham, a twentysomething New York hipster not unlike the character she plays, was nominated for best comedy actress, best comedy director and best writing for a comedy series.

Trailing with just three minor nominations was the

high school musical series "Glee," two years after it racked up 19 nominations.

Up for best miniseries or TV movie are "American Horror Story," "Game Change," "Hatfields and McCoy," "Hemingway and Gellhorn," "Luther" and "Sherlock: A Scandal in Belgravia."

"American Horror Story" racked up 17 nominations in all, including best actress (Connie Britton), another for best supporting actor (Denis O'Hare), and two for best supporting actress (Frances Conroy and Jessica Lange.)

In the race for best competition reality show are "The Amazing Race," "Dancing with the Stars," "Project Runway," "So You Think You Can Dance," "Top Chef" and "The Voice."

Missing from the Emmy list was "American Idol," a pillar of the US music industry after 11 seasons, but now at a crossroads after the sudden departure of judges Jennifer Lopez and Steven Tyler.

Its host Ryan Seacrest is nevertheless among the nominees for best host of a reality program -- as is Betty White, still going strong at 90, for "Betty White's Off Their Rockers."

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The great perks of gaming at Cool Casino in the Palm Beach has created a dedicated clientele; ask them what they like about the cozy casino, and they don't know where to start! The free slot tournaments every Sunday? Major pay-offs in their weekly Blackjack tournaments every Tuesday and Friday? Ladies' night every Wednesday with entertainment from great local bands? Or perhaps just the terrific benefits of being

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Summer Olympics: July 27 - August 12



Olympic bid lifts Murray after Wimbledon tears



MADRID (AFP) - The 32-year-old Los Angeles Lakers Basketball star Pau Gasol was on Friday named as the Spanish team's flag-bearer at the Olympics in place of tennis star Rafael Nadal, who withdrew from the London Games with a knee injury. Gasol won a silver medal with Spain at the 2008 Beijing Games and gold at the 2006 world championships. Spain are the current European basketball champions. Meanwhile, 30th-ranked Feliciano Lopez has been called up to replace Nadal in the Spanish tennis team.

LONDON (AFP) - Andy Murray insists the prospect of returning to Wimbledon to compete for an Olympic medal has eased his heartache in the aftermath of his emotional final defeat against Roger Federer.

World number four Murray will be back in action at Wimbledon to represent Britain in the Olympic tennis event just three weeks after making a tearful exit from the All England Club.

The 25-year-old Scot wept openly on Centre Court during a television interview just moments after Federer ended his hopes of becoming the first Briton to win Wimbledon since



Fred Perry in 1936.

In the circumstances, Murray, who has lost all four of his Grand Slam final appearances, could have been forgiven for wanting to be anywhere but Wimbledon for the foreseeable future.

But he is relishing the chance to go for gold in the Olympic event and cannot wait to get back in action on the lush lawns of southwest London.

"I think it was good for me the Olympics came so soon after Wimbledon, that gave me an extra push and extra motivation to get back on court and not think too much about the final," he said.

"I feel fine just now. I've been practising now for a week. If the Olympics wasn't here I would have taken two or three weeks off but I just took four or five days off and got back on the court.

"I would expect that by now I'm experienced enough and had enough tough losses to be able to deal with the final."

Murray's form has often nose-dived after Grand Slam

final defeats and he has made a conscious effort to avoid a repeat this time.

With that in mind, he made a quick return to Wimbledon only days after losing to Federer and spent time sitting on Centre Court so he could reflect on the final and start to move on.

"I thought a little bit about the match and then was thinking what it will be like playing at the Olympics because it's changed so quickly after the tournament," he said.

"They had all the London 2012 backdrops at the back of the court and I guess that maybe got my mind looking forward to this event."

Murray admits he was still distraught in the first few hours after leaving Wimbledon following the final, but some time with his family and friends, including a trip to a television comedy show, helped his mindset. "I go to quite a lot of comedy shows because laughing is normally the best way to get over most things," he said.

(file photo)

Aussie swimmer Monk slams 'brutal' Games exile



MANCHESTER (AFP) - Australian swimmer Kenrick Monk, who caused outrage when he and teammate Nick

D'Arcy were pictured posing with shotguns, slammed his Olympics punishment as 'brutal' on Friday.

Two Olympic runners suspected of doping

PARIS (AFP) - Two 3000m steeplechasers, Nordine Gezzar of France and Spain's Angel Mullera, were both axed from the Olympic Games on Friday on suspicion of doping.

French runner Nordine Gezzar could face a life ban after testing positive for the banned blood booster EPO (erythropoietin).

Gezzar has requested a "B" sample to be analysed, with the results of that test due to be known next week.

Having already served a two-year drug ban when he was suspended in 2006, Gezzar could be banned permanently should the second control also come back positive.

Gezzar, fourth at the European Championships in Helsinki, was caught out when he was tested along with all

the other Games-bound competitors by the French Anti-Doping Agency.

The 32-year-old long distance runner was handed a two-year suspension in 2006 when testing positive for the banned anabolic steroid nandrolone and the diuretic finasteride, which is used to treat hair loss but can also mask steroid use.

Later news emerged from Madrid concerning Mullera with the Spanish Athletics Federation (RFEA) announcing that he would also not be competing at London 2012.

The RFEA took the decision to remove Mullera from their squad after reports in the local media also connecting him with the use of EPO.

He has been replaced by Sebastian Martos.

The two men were allowed to keep their places in the Australian team for the London Games, but will be sent home once their events have been completed.

"We caught a bit of a harsh punishment but basically, social media was banned for us and we were getting sent home from the Olympics," said Monk.

"But it happens, it was one of those things they want to punish us with, it's quite brutal, but you know we have to accept that and move on from it."

The Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) banned the duo from using social media for the duration of the Olympics after they posted pictures on Facebook of themselves with high-powered weapons in a US gun shop.

The pair's coach Michael Bohl, who also coaches triple Beijing gold medallist Stephanie Rice, said the incident was a warning to others in the squad that they have to be sensible when they use social media.



Former Olympic high jump champion Yelena Slesarenko will miss London 2012 following the news that she is expecting her first child. The 29-year-old Russian reached the height of her career in 2004 when she won the gold medal in Athens before going on to win World Championship medals in Budapest, Moscow and Valencia, but only managed fourth in China at the last Olympics and admits she is slightly upset to miss out on the London Games.

Football: Fergie confirms United bid for van Persie



in all competitions last season and won both the Players' and Football Writers' Player of the Year awards.

"There are other clubs interested in the player. We've shown an interest and that's where we're at at the moment," Ferguson told MUTV.

Van Persie stunned Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger when he declared immediately after Euro 2012 that he wanted to leave the north

London team because he felt the club's ambitions did not

match his own.

That shock announcement prompted City and Juventus to start the chase for one of Europe's top strikers and United are now firmly in the hunt as well.

Arsenal were expected to announce soon whether van Persie would join them on their pre-season tour to Asia but later delayed the decision until Saturday, when they are due to leave the country.

It is widely believed Wenger will opt against including van Persie in a bid to avoid further acrimony.

LONDON (AFP) - Sir Alex Ferguson confirmed on Friday that Manchester United have made a bid for unsettled Arsenal striker Robin van Persie.

Ferguson made his move for van Persie after the Netherlands international, whose current contract expires at the end of the forthcoming campaign, announced earlier this month that he would refuse to sign a new deal with the Gunners.

Premier League champions Manchester City and Italian giants Juventus have also expressed interest in van Persie, but Ferguson tried to steal a march on his rivals with a firm offer.

It is believed Arsenal rejected United's bid because they want at least £20 million (\$31.2 million) for the 28-year-old, who scored 37 goals



BRIVE-LA-GAILLARDE (AFP) - Britain's Mark Cavendish produced a stunning finish to claim victory on the 18th stage of the Tour de France and equal the record number of 22 stage wins for a sprinter on the race. Sky teammate and compatriot Bradley Wiggins came over the finish line seconds later with his 2min 05sec overall lead on British teammate Chris Froome intact. Italian Vincenzo Nibali is still third overall at 2:41 after the 226 km ride between Blagnac and Brive-La-Gaillarde. Wiggins, who is set to become Britain's first winner of the world's biggest bike race on Sunday, played a starring role for his Sky teammate Cavendish in what was a technical but thrilling finale into Brive. Despite his yellow jersey making a rare appearance in the final kilometres as Sky led the chase of a small leading group, Wiggins said it was payback for the sacrifices Cavendish has made in the race. Meanwhile Former Tour de France podium finisher Frank Schleck is facing a possible suspension after a second 'B' sample confirmed a positive test for a banned diuretic. Today's 19th and penultimate stage is a 53.5 km time trial from Bonneval to Chartres. The race ends in Paris on Sunday.



ASUNCION :Leryn Franco, member of the Paraguayan olympic javelin team and model, takes part in a practice ahead of the London 2012 Olympic Games, in Asuncion on July 19, 2012. Franco's beauty was a media sensation during the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

AFP PHOTO

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MIDDLESBROUGH, U.K. : Great Britain forward Rachel Yankey (L) vies with Swedish defender Emma Berglund during their London 2012 Olympic games warm up football match between Great Britain women and Sweden women at the Riverside stadium in Middlesbrough, north-east England on July 20, 2012.

AFP PHOTO

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Olympics: Flame touches down in London in dramatic style



A Sea King helicopter carrying the Olympic Flame flies over London's Tower Bridge

LONDON (AFP) - The Olympic flame made a dramatic arrival in London on Friday when it was flown in by military helicopter and lowered to the ground by a marine commando a week ahead of the opening ceremony.

As the sun went down over the British capital, Royal Marine Martyn Williams abseiled from a helicopter hovering over the River Thames, carrying the Olympic flame to the ground in a lantern hanging from his belt.

day tour of the capital.

The tour will be the culmination of an 8,000-mile (12,800-kilometre) relay around Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

London Olympic chairman Sebastian Coe said he was "delighted" to welcome the flame, adding: "It's made an extraordinary journey."

Mayor of London Boris Johnson said: "Tonight London becomes the first city in history to be entrusted three times with the sacred flame of the Olympics first kindled by



British Royal Marine Commando Martyn Williams (R) hands the Olympic Flame to the next runner Dame Kelly Holmes (L) after its arrival at the Tower of London.

The action film-style descent at the historic Tower of London began symbolically at 20:12 pm (1912 GMT), exactly seven days before the opening ceremony on July 27.

Williams, 23, who was injured in Afghanistan in 2008 but is now fit again, passed the flame to British athlete Kelly Holmes. The winner of the 800 metres and 1,500m at the 2004 Athens Olympics then used the lantern to light the Olympic torch.

The flame will spend the night in the Tower of London, where Queen Elizabeth II keeps her ceremonial jewels, before embarking on a seven-

the ancient Greeks.

"It will spread the crackling bush fire of Olympic enthusiasm throughout this city and this country. I pledge that we will keep that flame burning brightly."

Earlier Friday, before the flame reached the capital, police arrested a 17-year-old man after he tried to grab the torch from a female torchbearer while it passed through Gravesend, a town southeast of London.

The teenager sprinted out of the crowd toward the torchbearer and was grabbed by the security officers accompanying the torch.



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